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# *Prism*



*The Literary Magazine of Peace College*

*Peace College Prism*  
*Spring 1992*

*Editor: Alison McLean*

*Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sally Buckner*

*Awards for Poetry*

*Wendy Woodley*  
*Jennifer Almond*  
*Beth Freeman*  
*Wiley Martti Mattox*

*Judges*

*Mrs. Rebecca Leggett*  
*Dr. Jean Bauso*  
*Lynn Fullbright*  
*Shannon DeBose*

*1992 Prism Staff*

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## FEBRUARY

Outside I stand beneath the trees, lifeless, barren.  
Empty branches stretch pleading skeletal fingers towards  
a lusterless grey sky.  
I burrow hands into pockets lined with crumpled cough drop  
plastic and kleenex from my dripping nose.  
Clenching fingers into a tiny ball, I feel my skin, dry and  
flaky, stretching taunt over knuckles.  
Tiny cracks lace through pale fissures, blood freezing even  
as it wells.  
My eyes blink and flutter against stinging wind, raking  
through course, muddy grasses, whipping about my ankles  
and calves.  
The sun saqs toward the horizon, a watery, bleary burden,  
ineffective in its attempt to warm or brighten.  
I await Persephone's ascension,  
Demeter's pride,  
Annual rebirth.

Wendy Woodley

## BROKEN SHELLS

She quietly slipped out from the sheets,  
trying not to wake him. While sliding into  
her robe, she tip-toed out and darted down  
the wooden steps into the loose sand. She  
faced the sea and lifted her arms allowing  
the wind to wrap every angle of her body.  
She tilted her head back as her sandy -  
blonde hair blew crazy along with the back of  
her robe. Piddling along the water's edge,  
she stooped down from time to time to scrape  
through the sand in search of an unbroken  
shell. "Funny how they're all broken," she  
murmured. Giving up her search, she folded  
her arms tight to her breasts and began  
walking back to the cottage. She treasured  
these private moments. They made her feel  
free. They made her feel pretty. She  
reached the patio door. While reluctantly  
turning the knob, a gust of wind stronger  
than she flung the door open and hurled her  
back into reality. His eyes jumped from his  
paper to her, then back to his paper, "It's  
nine-thirty, where's my coffee?"

Jennifer D. Almond

## BROKE AGAIN

*Childish habits are the hardest to break.  
It takes a will stronger than our own to do the breaking.  
My childhood saw your strong will and many  
habits broken.*

*reaching an uncautious hand for newly baked goodies,  
i burnt a tender finger on the oven hot pan.  
climbing shuffling feet up your grand magnolia,  
i splintered its aging arm.  
running tardy legs through the shortcut home,  
i trampled Mr. Averitte's cabbage.  
crawling mischievous knees under Miss Maggie's fence  
i tore my new ruffled blouse.  
cussing dirtied words at you from another room,  
i didn't know walls were so thin.  
Just last year I had another habit broken  
when I fled bursting in spirit without taking your directions.  
Got lost alone.*

Beth Freeman

## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

*An eternal fight for recognition  
Your sensitive heart built a prison  
No stone unturned  
But you always ended alone*

*You made shining stars on a dark sky  
When facing doubts you listened to your heart  
You never turned out the light  
But you always ended alone*

*You gave life to your audience's empty eyes  
When you wrote about the forgotten land  
Like the ugly duck who became a beautiful swan  
Your stories made life worth giving a chance*

*After your death they made you a legend  
Your books are famous, your desk displayed  
But when I go to the empty graveyard  
Your simple stone stands all alone.*

Christine Eg Pedersen

## WITHOUT VOICE

We stood without voice in the valley,  
waiting for the arrival of your train.  
The fog is noticeably heavy.  
Doesn't it hilariously weigh us down?  
You laugh.  
I laugh at you laughing.  
And the moon, so coy tonight,  
doesn't she easily amuse us?  
You sigh.  
I sigh at you sighing.  
We hear metal rapidly clicking,  
crescendoing towards us.  
The lights of your train peer brazenly  
around the mountain's edge.  
Melancholy dark is absorbed.  
The wait is over.  
You cry.  
I cry at you crying.  
Give my hand one last squeeze,  
my cheek one fleeting kiss,  
as you move from platform to train,  
lone bag in tow.  
Ah yes, you found the proverbial window seat.  
Now, look at me. I look at you,  
face pressed hard against cold pain.  
Your train mechanically inches forward,  
you, a little further away, with seconds apart.  
I am reverent below a shy moon in the valley,  
waving sad-byes to your train and  
praying mine has not passed me by.  
Perhaps it will come in the morning.

Beth Freeman



Jackie Hinkel



## *DIRGES FROM INSIDE A WALL*

*on the garden wall  
i sat regimentally still  
under a stagnant twilight.  
my feet hung languidly;  
i kept time with bare heel  
against cool stone  
as i listened to you sing  
dirges almost joyfully.  
oblivious to the audience you held,  
i smiled apologetically as  
the words you chose fell painfully upon my ears.  
i tasted the staleness of blood  
upon lips.  
the aura was suffocating.  
my heel stopped keeping time.  
but i still sat motionless  
under a stagnant twilight  
as you composed  
dirges almost joyfully.*

*Beth Freeman*

## *CAN I ?*

*Can I hold our memories?  
Would that be alright -  
to think of all the fun times  
we've shared within the night?  
Can I share our memories  
over and over again  
mentioning all the situations  
we have placed ourselves in?  
Can I relive our memories  
deep within my mind...  
feeling all the emotions  
that we thought we couldn't find?  
Can I save our memories  
so that they'd be there  
to pull into my thoughts  
whenver I may dare?  
Can I keep our memories  
close next to my heart,  
and can I call you sis  
with whom I shall not part?*

*Suzanne York*



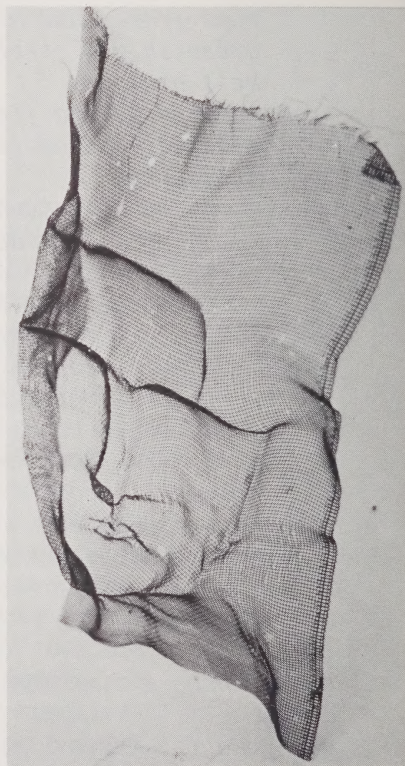
ONCE WILLY

urine  
raises it's five fingered stench  
clenched tight  
for frontal assault  
thick  
as steam engine smoke  
from my front stoop  
"hello willy", i say  
stepping over  
the broken  
    heap  
of yesterday's news  
umbrellaed above  
    bruise-blue parka  
    checkered double-knit lime grey trouser  
                    (back pocket hot dog  
                    forgotten)  
cardboard pulled tight  
around yellowed socks  
rope frayed and mildewed  
greenish red Steelers tobagan  
half hiding  
marbled bolgna flesh  
plastic Food America bag  
stomaching  
    4 Coca-Cola cans  
    3 Pabst Blue Ribbon cans  
    a faded photo of a woman in blue  
    5 Marlboro butts  
    2 black feathers  
    8 bottlecaps  
    a half-finished bag of Larry's Pork Rinds  
    3 rubber bands  
    1 black comb  
subway licked  
shower orphaned  
fractured eggshell  
    (snoring Night Train like a rotten radiator)  
bonebag  
of  
a once-upon-a-time man

Wiley Martti Mattox

## VOYAGES THROUGH MORRISON HOTEL

Jim, I found another door,  
Somehow I did  
I'm trapped there -  
You would've enjoyed it...  
the pain - being so close to death  
that you could've held it in your hand  
Just like I hold it in mine.  
Constant days of torture -  
you didn't need alcohol or drugs to  
take this trip, Jim  
It's the other side you wanted to see  
I'm there! I'm there!  
Sometimes I wonder if you went  
to heaven or hell - if you ever  
broke on through  
"the doors of perception"  
"the unknown and the known"  
I've gone beyond it, Jim and I'm lost  
If I find you, we'll be lost  
together  
Behind the other door.  
I've got the key  
won't ya come along with me?  
See how it really is to feel pain,  
hate, chaos, disorder  
It's all here Jim. Find me  
I'm trapped and not going anywhere  
I dare you, Morrison, to put down  
that bottle and follow me through Hell.  
I found the door that leads to it.  
Pain, pain, pain.  
You could've felt it.  
Death is a beautiful man, I hear  
A back door man, I fear,  
but did it feel as good as you thought  
it would?  
Do (did) you write poetry together?  
Leaving the world behind to  
step through the unknown -  
where are you going?  
Your grave is my door -  
desacrated, alone and empty.  
Jim, I found another door  
and when I come (soon, Jim, soon)  
we'll travel it  
together.



Wiley Martti Mattox



## FAIRY TALE

Green tables curl up red  
Over time standing still.  
A single white rose  
Left by a toad  
Who, not transformed by her kiss,  
Can never be a prince.

Betsy Mathes



Jackie Hinkel

## MEMORIES

Wrinkled and splotched hands  
nails cut and polished  
held a splintered frame  
protecting a memory.  
Shaking slightly,  
the face seemed alive  
dampened by two salted drops  
from above.  
Running over the glassed face,  
the calloused skin scratched slightly  
from her fingertips;  
he used to have the calloused hands.  
A pale scar from a burn  
almost hidden  
reminded her of the only work  
she was once used to.  
The symbolic adornment  
encircling one finger  
flashes from sunlight  
as her hand twists slowly.  
Placing the memory  
carefully upon the table  
these aged hands lifted annual flowers  
as they headed out the door.

Suzanne York

## CONDENSATION

My heart,  
Hidden behind a tattered curtain,  
Shattered, falling apart  
Until you peeked around my protective veil  
And found it,  
Warmed it, strengthened it, healed it.  
It wanted to be warmed,  
But it was hidden from view,  
And it came attached with strings of insecurities  
Woven so tightly together I couldn't see.  
Then my blinders were lifted by you.  
You.  
Oh, that I could touch your heart,  
Warm your heart,  
For yours too wears a protective shield,  
But your armor is of glass.  
Your heart is covered, not concealed.  
I see its pain;  
I understand it.  
I see its wounds, but I can't heal them;  
I can't reach them.  
I see the strings that bind your heart,  
Strings of frustration, denial, and misconceptions  
Bound together in sturdy knots.  
I want to destroy your taunting shield,  
But glass is sure to shatter.  
I'll accept the splinter of broken glass,  
The pain that it may shield,  
But can you?  
"Not Yet," you say, "Not yet."  
So I wait.  
I wait outside your fragile cell  
Patiently, silently,  
Praying that somehow,  
The warmth of my closeness,  
Will melt your wall of glass  
Rather than cloud it.

Elizabeth Raiford

Rina Tanaka





## KITE

*Preposterous flips and aerial turns  
Jerk the flamboyant acrobat  
Through mistic blue air,  
An absurdly feeble line  
His sole support.  
Obtrusive, squeaky applause  
Echoes from gigantic field grass  
Where childish navigators watch  
As their proud performer  
Dives*

*Two*

*One*

*Zero*

*Into a crash.*

*Open-mouthed viewers rush recklessly  
to his wounded side,  
Gently retrieve his dilapidated red paper form,  
Retie his snaking tail,  
Pull his line taut, and  
Hurl him back into the gleam of august.*

*Alison McLean*

## THE STATE OF THINGS

*City streets of perishable light  
Cascading into a ray  
of images projected in the wind  
Why put up with it?  
Protect the mind-  
Crimeless waves of crime  
float through vendors of snow  
Horns show up asses  
Cracked from too much use  
Leaving perishables behind  
Going back to stable unknowns*

*Dana Ford*

## NOTHING'S SIMPLE

*I never thought I'd feel this way. I thought it would be easy. You'd come into my life, and when you left, I'd simply move on. Chalk it all up to experience. That's a pretty good protective device... if I could fool myself into believing it. I can't. I don't want to lie to myself anymore. That's always been the easy way out. I wrapped my feelings up in a protective package, hiding them from myself and the rest of the world. Funny, It's something you gave me the desire to overcome. I miss you. I don't want to feel this way, but it's just happening. I miss your kiss. I miss your arms, your eyes, your smile, your laugh. You always made me laugh. I miss your warmth, your gentleness, your sincerity. You made me feel worthy of you, worthy of myself. I've never felt this way before. Nothing's simple anymore. I can't eat, I can't sleep. I can't stop thinking about you. Even in those rare instances, when I somehow manage to drift into sleep, (be it due to a little white pill or sheer exhaustion) you remain in my mind. I dream about you every time I close my eyes. Even the mere thought of you calling has become complicated. My mind is sent reeling, trying to make what should be such a simple decision. I weigh out all of the possible implications. Maybe I should wait for you to call me. Do you even miss me? Oh, God. I nervously pick up the phone, and begin to call your number. My trembling hand presses all but the last digit, hesitates, and frantically places the receiver down. What am I doing? I go through the ritual two or three times before finally finding the nerve to dial the last number. I wait for an answer, somehow knowing that you won't be there. I'm right. I'm greeted by a mechanical hello, and I hang up on your sister's recorded voice. Good. No one will ever know that I called. I got it out of my system. Maybe now I can wait a little longer to see if you call me. Why couldn't it have been your voice on the recording? I miss your voice . I miss talking to you. I could always count on you to be honest, straightforward. You told me exactly how you felt and encouraged me to do the same. It wasn't easy for me, but even when I was afraid, you waited patiently for me to connect my thoughts with my words. You always valued my feelings. You always gave me reason to trust you. I don't want to feel this way! Why do I have to think such wonderful things about you? It would be so much easier to hate you, to call you a jerk, to wish I'd never met you, But it wouldn't be real. You once told me that despite everything, you felt that what we had was real. That's what scares me. Whether or not I want to feel this way is irrelevant. I do feel this way. Whether or not I want to love you doesn't matter. I do love you. There. I said it. I love you.*

Elizabeth Raiford



## PRAYING SCREAMS

*We sat-*

*Me in the room's center sorting through  
old albums and thought, trying to decide  
which were worth saving.*

*You on your creative stool, bent over your  
Gibson. Face tucked away into concentration  
you pluck at the metal strings.*

*Ask you:*

*"Every once in a while don't you get the  
urge to just quit? To stop and think  
aloud--real aloud--and cry out every secret  
thing in you?"*

*You, still bent to your cause, fingers  
still sure to their test, tighten, loosen,  
test the stringed articles of your tireless  
attention. Finally, face departs from task  
disturbed. Fingers still at work-*

*You answer:*

*"No. Boys don't cry. There. Perfect. Now  
listen to this. Just learned it last  
night."*

*Face retreats. Fingers command submissiveness  
of rigid strings.*

*I listen-*

*I listen to you, for you, for your stillness  
that screams release.*

*Ask you:*

*"So, who taught you that?"*

*Tell me:*

*"Self taught."*

*We sat still*

*I resume sorting and discarding. You vibrate  
brown Gibson guitar screams. I hear your  
prayers. You've learned to cry.*

*Beth Freeman*

## SUNDAY IN YOUNGSVILLE

### I

this evening i was drawn into the night  
the yard behind my Grandmother's house  
stretched out around me like a sea  
full of shadows and the inner workings of evening  
i stood in the blank  
where in my childhood  
a barn had lived and breathed of  
children's laughing stories and hidden crawled on days  
it was a sanctuary of spiders  
empty mason jars  
memories of cows and pre-dawn milkings  
noisy chickens fidgeting into the morning  
nosing the floor for yesterday's corn  
it held in its sunworn walls  
my mother's childhood and before  
when she was still an empty spot on her father's knee  
"it was old  
had rooted"  
my mother said when asked  
now in its place  
a pool of dark and the smiling eyes of stars  
i stood there looking at the sky and all around the yard  
the rusted see-saw  
once a Maypole of cousins and neighbors  
responsible for the bloody nose of my brother  
who though insistant  
really was too small  
the glider swing  
lilting beneath the pecan tree  
in which my Grandmother swang and sang to  
five children  
fourteen grandchildren  
five great-grandchildren  
and countless others  
the pecan tree  
where my Grandmother gathers pecans each fall  
as regular as a squirrel  
to crack in the warm light of her kitchen  
into cookies and breads  
and bags of hours of love  
to give to company



## II

this afternoon  
i ran towards the setting sun  
my heart pushing hard against its reins  
i ran and ran to the edge of town  
where the sun had room to howl and whirl  
in evening ballad  
i ran until the  
collard greens  
creamed corn  
fresh tomatoes  
boiled potatoes  
steamed broccoli  
cooked carrots  
and chocolate chip cookie  
dipped in Bryers French Vanilla  
came knocking on my stomach's door  
and then i stopped  
before the antique store  
on the corner  
at the parting of the roads  
and i let the sunset bathe my heaving body  
it touched as soft as Midas  
the open field of corn  
the oaks  
the store of people's pasts  
the road  
and me  
then i turned  
now gold  
and ran into the song of sun receding  
and into the evening  
as it softly slipped slivers of the day  
into pockets  
loquets  
music boxes  
pillows  
cookie jars and children's books  
i ran and ran into the cool mouth of evening  
crying thank you  
thank you Grandma  
you make the sunset every night

Wiley Martti Mattox

GOVERNMENT FUNDED

Isolating you from my corner,  
I watch you, all of you  
walk up and back down the sidewalk across  
the street;  
I see the types of steps that you make  
Those which are full of pride or the ones  
which are small and seem to drag as if you  
are ashamed.  
I have heard you fighting and arguing among one another over  
trivial things,  
but, I had to step back in order to  
see so many of those like you rise up together  
in order to praise a King.  
Why can't you be more like them, is it that you refuse too?  
I have seen the looks in your children's eyes,  
and I wonder why you do not do more.  
But it only seems that you choose to be content in the state  
which you are in.

Tena Hicks

MERCURY

he brushes  
    against my cheek  
    staining red  
    the sunless white  
    with chilling caress  
then rises  
    waltzing  
    one by one  
    with the hairless crones  
    that stand watchful  
    at the river's edge  
he returns  
    taking my hair  
    full in his hands  
    to whisper moistly  
    into my naked ear  
    of snow



Kim Allen

Wiley Martti Mattox

## THE BLANKET

Together,  
we knit a blanket,  
shared its woolen folds,  
shut out night's breeze.  
we planned the colors,  
red blue yellow green,  
slowly finishing each row.

Beneath our blanket,  
we wondered, would it unravel,  
should we add another row?

You and I,  
beneath the blanket  
of red blue  
yellow green,  
Clenching the  
familiar folds.

Until,  
we each took scissors,  
cut up our creation,  
left the pieces of  
red  
blue  
yellow  
green  
to fade in Autumn's last longings,  
and freeze in Winter's cold light.

Kerri Habben

## HEART AND MIND

love, when the passion dies, lingers  
within  
the heart and is forgotten by the  
mind.

Dana Ford



## THE DEVIL IN THE DARK

There! There shines a moon over this black street tonight. I am seeing a million faces pass by under the soft, pale, light of the street lamp. It's my calling that draws me here, and I have no choice but to follow it here. It's the darkness that attracts me, the bright lights of the city are barbaric enough at night. 'Tis the night that attracts my kind, draws me here, to stand under her window, wishing. I hope everyday that I will grow stronger and bolder, to break away from this horrid life. I am taking innocent people's life blood and using it for no other reason than to support my own worthless life. I know what I do is wrong, but I have no choice, my instinct is my fatality. Here, here I hope to stand under her window to perform my last deed. May my master let me go! Let me go, I say!

It was centuries ago that I became the man I am today, and I found that I was trapped in this torturous life like a small, innocent kitten, dependent upon his mother's love for protection. I am chained to the night, never able to venture through the daytime by any means. I must remain subjected to the dark, my only source of energy.

When I walk by the moonlight, my hat covering my beastish eyes, my sinful face, I feel my hands draw too much attention from these innocent passersby. They are white, holy, clean, like the hands of a priest. And to touch that body that unstained body with these hands...

I've seen her walk through the city's street, bright, young, cheerful. Her innocence could never be destroyed, even by the harshest touch, like mine. Her family is the heart of the city, the blood of its body. It seems so unfair for me to have picked such a one to sacrifice, such a promising one.

And it's here. It's here I've stood for the last few weeks of my life, struggling with my instinct for power over my mind, contemplating performing the deed as if I had some choice, some say-so over it. I stand here every single night struggling with myself in the moon's much, much too bright light. Why am I like this? I am strong and bold. How can I be like this when I pray to my Lord above? Must I 'love what I destroy and destroy the thing I love'? Must I?

And there! There shines the moon, casting my shadow down that empty alleyway. Wait! What's that I hear? It's the slam of a car door and the song of my lovely nightingale's return! She's returned! She's returned! The time to end my struggle is here. Yes, it's the time for me to play my last role.

Dana Ford

## A BIT OF BLISS

There's a simplistic world  
which seldom go near;  
a world of mystery  
which most people fear.  
It holds exalted knowledge  
for those who reach out,  
but to those not daring,  
it only holds doubt.  
Each glistening petal,  
spotted with tears,  
spreads - proud of its uniqueness  
and towards bliss it is geared.  
The bright greenish color  
of each blade of grass  
catches the sunlight  
then reflects it like glass.  
Sliding and jumping  
over jagged-edged rocks,  
the fiery river  
portrays calmness as it mocks.  
There is one tree of wisdom  
aware only of love and peace;  
rays of light between its branches  
onto little lives it does release.  
Those of whom are curious  
who eat from this tree,  
will never be punished,  
but of nature will see.  
And all are welcomed,  
each one will be blest,  
but the eye of imagination  
they must possess.  
This world of exquisite beauty  
has only one flaw  
the key to its opening  
lies in the locked minds of us all.

Suzanne York

## WILLOWS IN OCTOBER

the trees stand  
hip to hip  
like women  
in sheer gold skirts  
while the sun's  
departing rays  
wander  
voyueristically  
through the fabric  
of their limbs

Wiley Martti Mattox



## BARRACUDA

Caroline Joyce

I look into faded eyes of blue  
Shadowy, flacid, tired January skies pregnant with snow  
Lashes, matted and marred with artificial sweetner, flutter  
grotesquely, like spiders wimpering to suckle, trapped  
within the web  
Cracks and crannies creep invading imperfections into  
smoothly settled foundations of concealing enhancer  
Tiny blemishes running rabid, etching time into a resisting  
surface  
Outside ice tinkles as it settles against glass; people  
thirsty for companionship gulp greedily, each swallow  
severing an inhibition  
Hands fidget and fold into carefully preconceived positions,  
the seams; words die as playful kitties smugly tuck  
tongues away  
I nudge muscles into carefully preconceived positions a  
feral grin, hunter of prey, life of the party  
Garrish cardinal lips heave and groan, too worn to fly  
sincerity  
Resigned, I turn from the mirror and return to my guests

Wendy Woodley



## THE GHOSTS BEHIND OUR MIRRORS

*The shadows of the soul hide unseen tears,  
That only He who bottles them may see,  
And dazzling darkness swallows countless fears.  
Just briefly in a stranger's eyes appears  
Some kindred spirit longing to break free;  
The shadows of the soul hide unseen tears.  
A cold and gloomy night, and someone hears  
Dim echoes of the past - sharp memory!  
And dazzling darkness swallows countless fears.  
Cloud flashes in a face, then disappears,  
Casts emptiness, escapes discovery.  
The shadows of the soul hide unseen tears.  
Inside, the silent battles burn their fires;  
Hushed inner music throbs a melody.  
And dazzling darkness swallows countless fears.  
Our God alone sees what's behind our mirrors,  
As though a part of lonely destiny.  
The shadows of the soul hide unseen tears,  
And dazzling darkness swallows countless fears.*

Lisa G. Mayo

## RAKING LEAVES

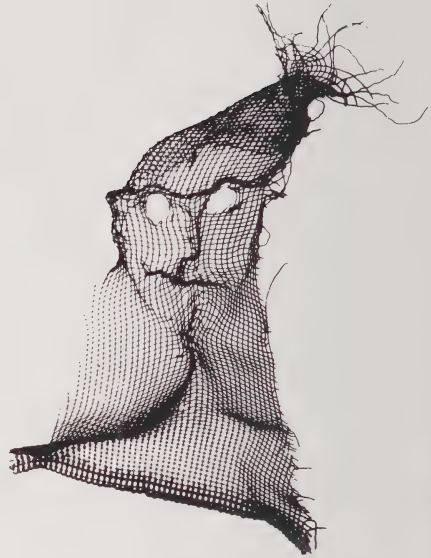
*Piles of summer lapped at my feet,  
Crisp, crumbling shreds  
Torn from the sentinel.  
Once strong and secure,  
Clinging complacently  
Enjoying precious warmth.  
Moaning in autumn wind,  
Casting silent shadows,  
Shattering on dying grass.  
Captured easily now,  
Limply tossed into a bag  
Left to lie at the curb.  
What was the cost,  
For piles of summer,  
Shredded crumbs,  
Slipping finally,  
No one cared,  
As they clung,  
Or even as they fell.*

Kerri Habben

## SEEMED WORSE

Teddy bear, teddy bear,  
Can you see all that they have  
done to me?  
Have you heard my repeated cries  
as they have abused me and lied?  
Can you taste my bitter tears  
that they helped to give me along with  
fears?  
Can you smell her cheap perfume?  
'Cause here she comes to do it again;  
Can you feel the pain inside?  
that won't go away until I die;  
Teddy bear. oh Teddy bear,  
won't you help?  
You'll hold the gun,  
and I'll pull the string,  
and together  
we will make my new life begin.

Tena Hicks



Wiley Martti Mattox

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON

When the door slammed behind you  
The sound reverberated in my ears  
Ringing over and over like insistent Sunday morning church  
bells herding sinners to slaughter  
Bouncing back and forth between ears bruised by heated words  
That damn fly we'd been swatting at all morning buzzed over  
to inspect the evidence of your affection  
Probing with soft, curious feelers, tickling, tasting,  
leaving tiny tracks of crimson across a pale cheek  
Behind me roar the crowds as the quarterback completes the  
pass  
Announcer wailing praise at unexpected victory  
I loathe football  
Dryer hums and fumbles with your weekend laundry  
Faucet drips, steady plop and slosh, constant reminder of  
the things you had no patience to fix

Wendy Woodley

## NIGHT WAY

The saxophone droned on  
in a what could be corner of the room.  
the silver winded tongue  
melted bluesy tunes  
tamed by free fingers  
teasing and touching  
those seated on  
a chair,  
stool,  
floor,  
leaning on  
a wall,  
bar,  
door,  
person  
sipping indifferent wine,  
tossing brown bag liquor,  
drawing methodically on  
cigarettes whose  
smoke  
ascends in seductive curls  
performing a sensual,  
deliberate dance  
to the saxophone's  
low timbre  
that filtered through  
hazy silence.  
The listeners were entranced,  
enthralled,  
moving only to interrupt  
streaming sweat,  
to push away damp, matted hair,  
to drink, to pull  
again on a cigarette.  
From its place, the sax  
continued its soothing croon,  
mastering the winsome night,  
composing tomorrow's rhythm.

Beth Freeman



Jackie Hinkel



## SERIOUS

Blood trickles down and I wish you were here  
(Since we both love the taste of blood and tears)  
I wondrously gaze at the newness of things  
While an elf fills my fingers with ten shiny silver rings.  
I call your name and my voice has no sound  
So I wave my arms wildly but you're nowhere to be found  
Look at these jewels this careless art  
I'm trying to describe it but I don't know where  
to start...

Katherine Carpenter

## GREETINGS: FROM ONE HOT PANTS TO ANOTHER

Young blood  
look at you.  
You looking  
Good.  
Hey  
Come here.  
Your mama and  
daddy let you  
out the house  
looking like that?  
AH, go head girl.  
I knows ya!

Betsy Mathes

## JUNGLE

Jungles surround us but we travel on,  
undaunted  
Separately, together and equally.  
Jungle mothers come out to squawk at  
us  
And we discover at the end of the trail  
there is a dead end (nowhere to go).

Dana Ford

## THE WAIT

Atmosphere waited, swollen with moisture, eagerly awaiting  
thunderous release

Wind raking my hair, insistent, teasing, causing each strand  
to whip my face, leaving tiny red cracks through which  
excitement threatens to erupt through a facade of calm  
anticipation

Working herself into a self-righteous frenzy,  
Nature presses down deeply into my flesh, melding bone and  
skin tightly into a feral grin beneath which seethes  
impatience

Beneath my feet tiny pebbles of sand scatter and scurry to  
find shelter from the overwhelming stranger  
approaching from the horizon

Waves lick between my toes, sending spidery, frothing  
fingers crawling across the shore, seeking a hold  
upon which to fasten and heave its bulk behind  
sheltering mountains of sand, envying upright creatures  
who find solace in walls

Alas Neptune enjoys no refuge; his scouts are recalled,  
hissing, sucking hapless victims into the churning  
mass, fighting the inevitable

Before the driven swells run tiny crustaceans and funny,  
feathered clowns, confused and frightened, intimidated  
by the wait

I lick my lips, dry and wind-scraped,  
the briny mist coating my face and body, melting into my  
tongue, trickling down my throat

Tiny hairs stand erect, prickling muscles taunt with  
sustained eagerness as the air is breathtakingly  
electrified

Thor bellows and the sky ignites in brilliance

Wendy Woodley

## MORNING

*The sleep forces itself through my eyes  
fills the air around me.*

*Everything is buzzing  
just passing through.*

*The remainder of all my dreams  
is still behind my eyes.*

*All my senses are mixed with  
the blue morninglight and  
the world lives in movie.*

*Tiredness, Tiredness in my body  
my soul is jelly.*

*My unconsciousness is fastened to the past  
my consciousness to the future  
the present is only two dimensions.*

*I take a sip of the world  
again.  
And disappear a place in myself.*

*Christine Eg Pedersen*

## MY REFLECTION

*I looked at her  
I didn't recognize her  
Even though I knew her a lifetime  
I looked into her eyes  
I could feel her tears begin to build up  
and slowly trickle down her cheek  
I knew she wanted to reach out  
And I wanted to reach out to her  
After a moment her tears were flowing  
In full force  
Again, I felt the urge to reach  
Out to her  
And finally I did  
But only to be stopped by the mirror!*

*Carolyn Davis*



## LETTER OPENER

Strong hands  
Slam shut the steel box,  
Fumble with the single envelope in that  
    nervous quarterback way,  
Rip at it like momma's grater  
    shredding cheddar cheese.  
Green eyes  
Like starved kittens  
    consume words,  
Devour loving lines with the speed of  
    fathers flipping Friday channels,  
Spark silver slivers  
    that fly fast in a frenzied dance of joy.

Collected face casually rises.  
Laugh sneaks out with wishful sigh.  
Ego forcefully restrains a high leap of pride.

Feet work steadily toward their dorm.  
Arm throws open the door.  
Roommate asks, "Did you get any mail?"  
Mouth answers, "Just a letter from my girl."  
Smile spreads wide the jade feathers of a peacock.

Alison McLean



civi-LIE-zation

Caroline Joyce

i wonder if the moon can see me  
trapped between the earth and sky  
like a fish in a tank  
a fish that has forgotten how to breathe  
beneath the surface of the water

Wiley Martti Mattox

## FOLLOWED

Everything is dark.

I am running. My heart is pounding hard. Where am I? I stop and start to feel my way around me. I feel stone walls, wet with something cold and sticky. My trembling hands work their way down to the ground I have been running on. The grass between the round stones I sense is also wet and cold. Thoughts are whirling round in my head. Where am I? What am I doing here? Where did I come from, and where am I going? I look behind me to see if anyone is following me, but see nothing. Nothing but darkness. There is no light anywhere. I turn around and slide down with my back against the wall until I reach the ground. The chill is increasing now and I put my arms around my crouched legs and lean my head against my knees in a desperate attempt to keep the warmth in my body from getting out. I cannot gather my thoughts. My brain feels like a merry-go-round, on which someone has put the speed up, much too fast. Suddenly I rather feel than hear that something is coming closer. I don't stop to see if it is a friend or an enemy; I run. Not knowing where to go, I run as fast as I can. My feet know it before my brain registers the inevitable fact--the ground is gone. I'm falling, falling, falling.....

I wake up, relieved to recognize the things around me. I am in my own bed in my very own room. I have had one of my frequent nightmares again--"Will they never cease?" I get out of the bed and walk towards the door. It opens without my hands touching it. Suddenly I am a standing outside with the door closed behind me. No matter how hard I try to get it open, it remains closed. I am running again.

And everything is dark.

Ing-Marie Lonnerhaden



Sara Webster

## THUNDERBIRD

*Taking flight in the black of night  
The stars in the sky are the only light  
Is it cold up there? Is there enough air?  
Do you sometimes think of me when you get scared?  
Your wings are spread and you look to one side  
The thunder claps and under those wings I hide.  
Your perspective doesn't change, you don't utter a cry.  
Beside my Thunderbird I also can fly.*

*Katherine Carpenter*

## AROUND THE YEAR

*Burning sand hurts my naked feet  
the pain reminds me of my crystal vision of you.*

*My days fall like leaves  
and gather under the tree to pictures.*

*Whatever you bring is always cold  
slowly you make my soul frostbitten.*

*You gave me an illusion of spring  
as provision on my desertwalk.*

*Christine Eg Pedersen*

## NO CLOTHES

*Now it's green, now it's orange, now it's melting all together  
Now I'm heavy as a building, now I'm lighter than a feather  
Swallow swallow gulp gulp (I'm swallowing my pride)  
Now I'm standing naked and I have nothing to hide  
Are they all wrong, am I all right, does anybody care?  
I can't get away from them and their unwavering stares.  
They're all walls of concrete blocks, smooth and high and white  
I'm closed in--I can't climb and they're blocking all my light.*

*Katherine Carpenter*



AQUANETTA'S ODE

i see you  
standin' in your solitude  
naked  
and in flame  
i see you  
spinnin' in the streets  
preachin' madness  
sellin' prayers

lost soul  
in the  
alley  
YOU NEED SAVIN'

girl  
got that baby  
that baby in your arms  
you CHILD  
you child MOTHER  
painted  
like a  
HOOKER  
bleedin'  
screamin'

HELP ME

to the needle  
to the man  
let me hold you in my mouth  
girl child stop that dyin'  
buy a prayer  
a little time

baby's cryin'  
veins are empty

where's your cheba  
where's your Tony  
where's your water  
woman girl  
full blaze

Wiley Martii Mattox

## CLOUDS IN MY EYES

*I remember your fight for lfie  
Your tiny hands turned cold  
While the light died in your innocent eyes*

*Soon your soul is traveling  
Waving good-bye  
But your shadow stays in my mind*

*Oh Tobias, my brother  
I miss you so much*

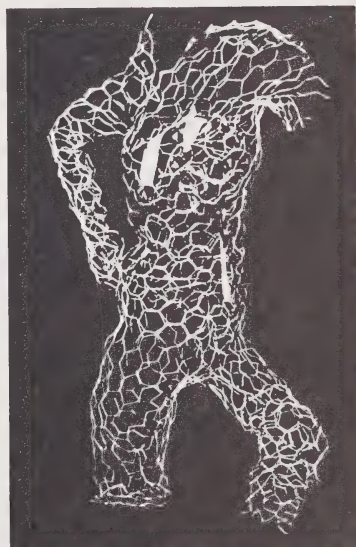
*Every child I see reminds me of you  
My pictures of you will never fade:  
Your small impatient feet in the read sandals  
Your precarious smile that lightened my day*

*Surrounded by laughter I can never smile  
In my heart is your voice whispering: Good-bye*

*Oh Tobias, my brother  
I miss you so much*

*I would have gone  
You could have stayed.*

*Christine Eg Pedersen*



*Heather Leinenweber*

## SKY

*You've emptied me  
Gathered up in your arms  
then thrown to the sky  
And allowed to drift carelessly  
back to Earth  
allowed to feel  
desolate and alone...forever*

*Dana Ford*

## SCARIFICATION

*if we must touch each other let's do so with rakes  
metal tentacle skin caresses  
and sit in the sand watching it shift  
exposing the bones of those before us*

*your dreams stole the blanket last night  
and the light from the moon was cold on my thighs  
our breath spoke of childhood and the bitter taste of mortar  
i felt the mattress begin to hyperventilate*

*why are we always in different rooms at the moment of climax  
i can hear the groans through the walls*

*i stood in the window  
and measured the ground  
it's midnight  
or later*

*what was your name  
the one they gave you before the processing date*

*you should have told me you didn't read braille  
before i led your hands to my breasts.*

*Wiley Martti Mattox*



*Jackie Hinkel*

## MEET YOU IN THE AMETHYST

*This is where we meet, right under the Amethyst  
stained by God's thick brush.*

*The fan is taken from the easel, whisking some yellow, then  
red, then white where the clouds modulate from violet to  
amethyst.*

*The beams of bright pierce my pupil, but that's alright  
because this is where we meet.*

*The sparks jump around on the ridges of the warter  
then fold into whote lace reaching for the bank.*

*The pelican stands steady on a post of the old dock,  
watching his shadow dance, and he's happy because we met.*

*Then there's the Martha, tickled by the lifting fog,  
her weathered sail posts reach to touch the speck of gold.*

*As her shabby nets cling to keep them warm,  
and she too is happy that we met.*

*The trees whisper the gossip of the wind,  
they offer their arms for the birds who wish to sit.*

*Perhaps the tune of this song is only for our eyes to hear,  
she sings pretty because she knows father,*

*It's the only place where we can meet.*

Jennifer D. Almond

## FALLEN FORTUNE

*A column crumbles greetings to  
Rodents, roaches, and worms.  
A moat of shingles fallen from the roof  
Encircles the house like a castle.  
White paint peels away as moss  
Creeps up, destroying the results  
Of years of hard labor.  
Shutters flapping in the wind  
Warn: "Don't  
Come  
In  
Don't  
Come  
In"*

Betsy Mathes



## BLACK CAPS

Dark blue water rolls  
And the power it holds  
Could never be told  
I look up from the ocean floor  
And don't know how much more  
I can give before  
My mind lets the water in  
I try to hold the dolphin's fin  
But it shrugs me off and continues to swim  
I want to swallow all that dark blue  
The only way to tell if my vision is true  
Is to keep it from swallowing me the way it swallowed you.

Katherine Carpenter

## THE DAY'S LAST BREATH

The day has come to a halt as  
the transition is a melting orange.  
Jagged edges from mountain sides  
pierce the sky, creating droplets of red.  
Layers of mustard yellow  
cast over the azure sky  
as the trees are shadowed  
to a black and transparent state.  
The descending sun smoothes out the edges  
like a Tennessee whiskey,  
to the miseries and stress,  
waiting for the day's last breath.

Cara Hankey

## ADDICTION

Cold slabs of glass stand on end and  
separate me from you my dear.  
I know you think you're too cold for me,  
but you've never felt my frozen heart.  
I like it that way don't you if you  
don't now I know you will soon enough.  
You're stronger than me, but it's okay  
everyone else is too. You think you might  
hurt my body and you don't want  
to do that, but I say please do.

Katherine Carpenter

## THE TREE

WE SIT HERE EACH DAY--WAITING FOR OTHERS  
AND THE TIME TO PASS  
QUICKLY; AS NOT TO WAIT FOREVER,  
BUT FOREVER IS OUR LIVES AND WE CARE BUT ONLY  
TO LET THEM PASS.  
TO YOU I GIVE MY LIFE;  
I GIVE MY HOURS AND MY HEART  
I CAN NOT WAIT FOREVER--AS MANY DO  
HAPPINESS HAS LEFT THROUGH THOSE HOURS SPENT  
SORROW IS OUR PAST AND LEAVES US UNINSPIRED  
SO MY LIFE IS CUT.  
NOT NOTICING THE HOURS, BUT IT IS THE TREE I NOTICE;  
NOT JUST ANY TREE--A TREE OF LIFE;  
AND TO THAT TREE, AS WELL, I GIVE MY LIFE.  
YOU AND I, AS WELL, KNOW FOREVER IS TOO LONG TO ASK.  
I WANT NOTHING BUT A DREAM  
A DREAM OF SILENCE AND PLEASURE  
YOU ARE MY DREAM AND SO IS THE TREE  
I GIVE ME LIFE TO THIS, AND FOREVER I WILL LIVE HAPPILY WITH  
THEM IN MY DREAMS  
NEVER TO HOLD THEM DEAR, BUT TO LET THEM LIVE  
WITH THE THOUGHT OF HAPPINESS I ONCE GAVE THEM.  
I WILL NEVER SEE THE TIMES OF LIFE AS ONCE I DID WITH THEM.  
MAYBE YOU AND THE TREE WILL REMEMBER ME, AND WHAT I GAVE  
TO YOU.

Shannon McElwain



Jackie Hinkel

## 20 SECONDS OF DEATH

Silence.  
Shriek.  
Deceiving blue water.  
Glimmering eyes, but no spirit.  
Metamorphosis takes place  
On the dilapidated veranda.  
Two work like acrobats  
Pumping, hurdling, reviving.  
Mother's eyes plead.  
Child breathes  
An orgasmic breath.  
Life rushes in as ferociously  
As it was drowned out.

Betsy Mathes

NEW YORK

Train wheels turn silently  
in the night air of slicing wisdom.  
Squeaking closer in my mind  
bringing me home from a trouble  
to a greater one.  
No escape from world to world  
where it follows like rain on a  
failing parade that one chooses to  
ignore anyway.  
Memories plague the everlasting soul  
and bring heaven to its knees  
Through train wheels silently  
squeaking through the world  
tonight.

Dana Ford

BURN A ROSE

Look at love  
and let this truth  
fling past  
disguised masks;  
the grimace of joy,  
sensuality;  
to reach a place  
where white is seen  
as many particles  
of colored black  
while that sight, too  
is doubted,  
still,  
cutting through  
the fence  
with sharp and active  
menace of mind  
that feels the heat approach  
and curls to touch itself  
to taste the petal scorch  
and the wisdom in the ash  
and the hope that it disowns,  
the burning of a rose.

Cara Hankey

## SATURDAY MORNING PIANO LESSONS

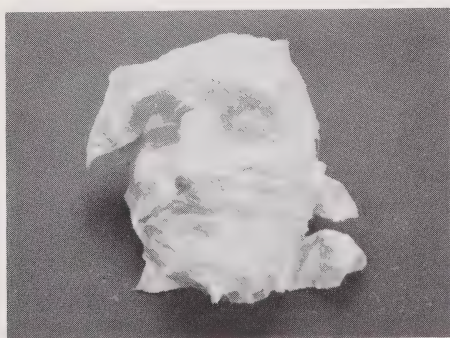
*Frigid air seeps through my skin,  
jump-starts my still-numb brain.  
Windy fingers, the invisible feathers of a dove,  
tickle my nose and lashes.  
Ice-glazed ponds whisper an invitation  
to forget my scales and whittle away life  
one figure eight at a time.  
Snow white-washes clean a limitless canvas  
for the colorful art of my imagination.  
Naked trees play twister in an endless forest.  
How wonderful winter appears  
through the window of Mrs. Brown's piano studio.*

Alison McLean

## SECRETLY SEEN

*That twisted mass of death, thin as paper,  
So delicate and so coarse to the touch.  
Scattered windows let in light from taper  
While its winding veins, its dark flesh doth clutch.  
Its complex form, so ugly yet unique,  
Shelters its personality from within;  
And the small spiders web on the left cheek  
Has imprinted its woven strings so thin  
The deep brown color with streaks of the night  
Hides the pastel beauty that it once bore  
This creation such a lovely sight'  
In the winter away from the tree it tore.  
Whispering in the breeze, the quiet thief  
Of this beauty secretly seen...a leaf.*

Suzanne York



Wiley Martti Mattox



## PLEASE, CHILD

Small child,  
lend me your palm.  
let me trace where the miracles hide,  
where whispers comfort.  
Here, time knows refuge from shameless age,  
untainted living is captured.  
I beg you,  
show me where giants slumber,  
where dragons waltz,  
where fear loses face.  
In your hands, such a promised space,  
lies the power to cast away lingering shadows,  
to calm riven rage.  
Dear child,  
show your pure, unblemished palms,  
cease the taunting, ill-tongued winds,  
silence the racking laments of the mothers at Ramah.  
Good child,  
stretch your hands wide,  
place their prints upon this dark world,  
that we may memorize and follow their lines,  
even for an ephemeral moment.  
Please, child.

Beth Freeman

## COMMUNICATION

Sliding sinuous, soothing, oozing  
Wonderously woven webs of deceit  
Porous, adjustable, adaptable  
Fantastic contortions before defeat  
Lavishly licking black into white  
Roughened, sickened, swollen from bite  
Radical, rabid, unfettered for flight  
Careful, don't chatter to shadows from light  
Sing praise all we gifted with tongue  
Listening, learning, soiling minds of the young  
Grow strong, dance fluid, arms engulf the sky  
Little one, listen carefully, let me teach you to lie

Wendy Woodley

## SOCIETY

A world full of hate  
Why, do you think it's too late  
People not being people  
The way they were made  
People being fake  
I'm not under that charade  
With chaos in the world  
How can anyone survive  
If I dove off this bridge  
Do you think you would dive  
Could it be that life is a game  
Or is there someone we know to take the blame  
Why does everyone want fame  
I don't know, but it's all the same  
Society is skin deep  
And life is so hard to keep  
Living day to day  
And me feeling this way  
It's a world full of hate  
I think it's too late

Carolyn Davis

## MINIMUM WAGE

Girl, letmetellya...  
That new girl your mama and daddy hired,  
She don't do nothin'.  
And honey, she is so ugly  
that girl was hit by the ugly stick.  
I ain't lyin'.

The other day I had five cars lined up over yonder  
And ten customers up at the front  
And she was steady smoking a cigarette.  
Now you know that ain't right.  
And you know how my feet hurt, right?  
And me up here all by myself.  
I don't like her.  
I'm going to get her fired.  
I ain't lyin' to ya.

Betsy Mathes

LIFE'S MEANING  
AN EPIPHANY AT ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

Curving stone beneath my tired feet,  
Smooth carpet that does not end.  
Archway above, my strong umbrella,  
A shield from relentless heat.  
Lingering, burnt red all around,  
Warm winds fanning my sunburned face.  
And I rest on the edge,

feet dangling,  
eyes adoring.  
God's mountain rise,  
my guardians,  
until...  
I shall kiss their snowy white cheeks,  
Hug their jagged bodies,  
My journey not yet over,  
Satiny rocks beneath my tired feet,  
Slippery soles sliding precariously,  
Whenever I fall,  
I shall see my guardians,  
And rise to move onward.

Kerri Habben

INFORMAL ROSES

Black cat licks steam off window and  
X's red pill box is empty and four  
white envelopes demand a future and  
it's true Baby that "after all this time  
all I have is time" and it's strange  
to lie by telling the truth like when  
no one confessed to bringing mother those  
roses she found in the sink and I said,  
"We find ourselves living in a giant's  
mouth" and dear X, I heard a piano's  
hammers hammer the day into silver  
while birds crawled into cuckoo-cloud land.  
Those silly lizards in feathers and this day  
falls away off this page so let's meet for  
drinks far from where police cars blink by  
and fill our eyes with  
informal roses.

Cara Hankey





